

HONORING OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS: OUR 2002 VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS



BLM's 2002 "Making a Difference" National Volunteer Award winners were honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC. Pictured (left to right) are: Billie Gayle Young, National Wild Horse Association (NWHHA); Neal White; Craig Leets and Sherry Warren, also of NWHHA; Dave "Big Bear" Johnson; Otto Brock of the Mimbres Archaeological Team; Hannah and Hollie Becker; Jerry and Pat Vine; Sarah Clayson; Cathy Becker; Karen Clayson; Janet and Cliff Tipton; Sherry and John Gerrish. Not pictured: Cara Wardlaw-Bailey, Beryl Wardlaw, and BLM Employee winner Linda Berkey, who were unable to attend.

On May 8, 2003, nine outstanding individuals and teams and one exceptional BLM employee were formally recognized by the agency at the annual "Making a Difference" National Volunteer Awards. The awards were presented during a special ceremony at the U.S. Department of the Interior's historic South Penthouse and Roof Terrace in Washington, DC.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke, unable to attend because of a prior commitment, offered her thanks and congratulations to the winners via a videotaped message. She noted, "In recognition of the importance of volunteerism, this year we have renewed our commitment to 'Take Pride in America.' It is particularly fitting that we take the time to recognize those who best exemplify this ideal."

Elena Daly, BLM Assistant Director for the National Landscape Conservation System, and Bob Johns, BLM Deputy Assistant Director of Communications, were featured speakers and presenters. A “meet and greet” brunch reception and a multimedia tribute to the award winners and their diverse accomplishments complemented the award presentations. Guided tours of selected Washington-area attractions and a “VIP” barge trip on the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, courtesy of the National Park Service, were also on the schedule for the guests of honor during their three-day stay in the nation’s capital.

Honored for their work in 2002, the award winners represented some of America’s most passionate volunteers, having donated significant time and effort—and sometimes even their own funds—on behalf of America’s 260 million acres of BLM-managed public lands and their natural and cultural resources.

A national panel of BLM and partner organization representatives selected the

winners from a large pool of nominations submitted by BLM State Offices and Centers. The award recipients were chosen for their exceptional efforts in management and conservation of the public lands and their resources, as well as educational initiatives that increase public knowledge of those lands and resources.

BLM recruits approximately 20,000 volunteers each year to perform a variety of jobs, from campground host to archaeologist to educator. In 2002 alone, these good citizens contributed more than 1.2 million hours of their time to the public lands, worth an estimated \$20 million. In many instances, volunteers serve as BLM’s first point of contact with the public, playing an important ambassadorial role for the agency. In order to acknowledge these invaluable volunteer contributions, BLM initiated its “Making a Difference” National Awards in 1995, holding its first recognition ceremony in 1996. This year’s observance marked the eighth annual presentation of these awards.

VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENTS

CARA WARDLAW-BAILEY

BERYL WARDLAW

BLM Field Office

Anchorage, Alaska

Cara Wardlaw-Bailey first came to the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1999. She was then a high school student with a budding interest in plants. Too young to drive herself to the Science Center, she enlisted the assistance of her mother, Beryl Wardlaw. This mother-daughter team quickly became chief stewards of the Science Center's herbarium. The pair has collected, mounted, and identified more than 200 plants from the Campbell Tract. They've worked with staff to create an herbarium guide designed to help others access the collection; developed a database to catalog and print labels for all the specimens in the collection; expanded the collection to include specimens from nearby Chugach State Park; begun a digital photo collection of plants on the Campbell Tract; and started a willow collection in the herbarium after attending a willow identification workshop. All their hard work has helped create an invaluable record of plant life on the Campbell Tract. The pair has also trained 19 other volunteers to collect, preserve, and catalog plants for the herbarium. Most recently, they have expanded their efforts to reach students at the Science Center. Beryl, an artist, created a paper-art picture depicting all the

features of glaciers for the glacier program at the Science Center. Since 1999, Cara and Beryl have given approximately 400 hours of service to the Science Center, sharing their love of all things natural with growing numbers of area students.

DAVE "BIG BEAR" JOHNSON

BLM Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Dave Johnson has been a resident volunteer and caretaker at the Squaw Leap Management Area for 12 years, volunteering over 3,000 hours per year in support of BLM's Bakersfield Field Office. He provides onsite visitor information and interpretation services, facility maintenance, search and rescue assistance, resource protection, and assists BLM resource staff with information on current and historical resource conditions. Dave created and now facilitates an outstanding cultural heritage education awareness program with a focus on the rich cultural history of the area. Educating over 2,500 schoolchildren from local and regional schools each year, this hands-on, interactive program meets California education standards. Local volunteers and American Indian tribal members manage the program. Many of the materials used in the program were either made by Dave or purchased with his personal funds. He also coordinates the efforts of hosted workers, state inmate work crews, and community organizations on adopted trails and other projects in the area. Because of the great personal dedication of this one volunteer, BLM has

been able to improve and maintain existing recreational facilities such as trails, campgrounds, and picnic areas. Dave has elicited an estimated volunteer contribution of over 4,800 hours each year from hosted workers, inmate crews, and club members. He has truly “made a difference” to the local community and to the lives of thousands of schoolchildren in two counties.

JERRY AND PAT VINE

*BLM Field Office
Bishop, California*

For the last five years, Jerry and Pat Vine have committed their hearts and souls to the maintenance and care of BLM’s Tuttle Creek Campground near Lone Pine, California. They have impeccably maintained the campground facilities, which draw repeat campers year after year, and displayed unfailing support of and compassion for campers in distress. Because of their accomplishments, campers have donated over \$20,000 to the Tuttle Creek Donation Program, established to augment campground maintenance funding. The Vines initiated a tree planting project for all 85 sites at the campground. Using their own money, they purchased tree saplings, fertilizer, and support poles for a planting at each site. They have replaced malfunctioning irrigation and water lines for the trees and refurbished over 80 redwood picnic tables. Perhaps Jerry and Pat’s greatest contribution is their willingness to respond to campers’ needs and interests, particularly during unforeseen or emergency situations. They recently rendered aid to a

disoriented elderly camper, personally caring for the individual until relatives arrived. Their greatest act of courage occurred during a wildfire in 2002 when Jerry declined to leave the campground until all campers were safely evacuated from the area. He also secured and safeguarded campers’ personal belongings before he left the campground. Numerous letters of praise for the Vines are clear testimony to the positive difference these two volunteers have made for public lands visitors throughout the last several years.

NEAL WHITE

*BLM Field Office
Jackson, Mississippi*

Neal White, a teacher at Jupiter Community High School, Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy, in Jupiter, Florida, has served as a volunteer for the BLM Jackson Field Office for the past seven years. Since 1997, Neal has organized local student participation in National Public Lands Day events hosted at the Jupiter Inlet Natural Area by the Jackson Field Office. Students have assisted in massive exotic plant removals, general tract cleanup, the reintroduction of native plant species, and the planting of scrub oaks; worked on a wetlands construction project; conducted tortoise burrow monitoring; and potted mangrove seedlings. For Neal, volunteering does not end with this once-a-year event; he and his students also stay active in year-round monitoring of the Jupiter Inlet Natural Area. Some of the projects that Neal has been involved in

include: adopting newly-planted scrub oaks as a senior-class project, leading volunteers in an ongoing wetlands construction project, and planting over 7,000 mangrove seedlings. Most recently, Neal has been instrumental in providing realistic field study experiences for his student volunteers through monitoring of fish utilization of the constructed wetland on the eastern edge of the property, and the establishment of permanent plots to monitor vegetative response to prescribed burns or mechanical manipulation. Over the years that Neal has volunteered, he and his recruits have put in over 1,500 hours of service, with an estimated value of more than \$80,000.

NATIONAL WILD HORSE ASSOCIATION

*BLM Field Office
Las Vegas, Nevada*

During 2002, members of the National Wild Horse Association donated 25,000 hours of service in support of the BLM Las Vegas Field Office, the equivalent of \$455,000 in staff time. The group's many activities included: helping maintain springs and monitoring horse herds; monitoring rangeland health; rescuing wild horses and burros (and successfully raising more than 800 orphaned foals to adoption age in the last 10 years); assisting with wild horse and burro gathers; sponsoring a wild horse and burro show; providing wild horse and burro pre-adoption clinics and screenings; sponsoring monthly post-adoption clinics and compliance checks; and actively participating in public awareness and education programs. In addition, Billie Gayle Young, current association president,

actively advocates for wild horses and burros by serving on the BLM's Mojave-Southern Nevada Resource Advisory Council and as a member of the Outside Las Vegas Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving the public lands surrounding Las Vegas, enriching the experience of its visitors, enhancing the quality of land for local residents, and promoting community stewardship of these valuable resources.

JOHN AND SHERRY GERRISH

*BLM Field Office
Las Cruces, New Mexico*

John and Sherry Gerrish assist 21,000 visitors a year at the Three Rivers Petroglyph Site and Recreation Area, near Tularosa, New Mexico, a site that consists of a camping and picnic area, as well as 960 acres containing over 20,000 petroglyphs and a prehistoric village of the Jornada Mogollon culture. John and Sherry have taken a personal interest in caring for the recreation site and improving the camp host's accommodations. Last year, the couple worked five to seven days a week serving as the main caretakers. They are frequently required to assist visitors and campers after a full eight-hour workday. In addition to opening and closing the recreation area, the Gerrishes staff the information desk, perform the majority of the maintenance work, pick up trash, clean the restrooms, groom the campground, and help visitors by answering questions and explaining the rules of the area. The Gerrishes have provided additional help by overseeing a trash removal contract and

monitoring the condition of a riparian fence that provides protection to the Three Rivers Riparian Area. During the past eight years, John and Sherry have assisted approximately 170,000 visitors and collected over \$100,000 in recreation fees for BLM. With their support, BLM has been able to establish a visitor's center, provide accessible facilities, construct an RV campground site, and preserve remnants of the Jornada Mogollon culture for future generations.

MIMBRES ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEAM

BLM Field Office

Las Cruces, New Mexico

The BLM Las Cruces Field Office Mimbres Archaeological Team consists of an archaeological site monitoring and patrol team and an archaeological research team. The monitoring team is comprised of retired citizens from various walks of life who are dedicated to preserving our nation's cultural resources. They monitor the condition of over 100 significant archaeological and historic sites considered eligible for, or listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, and assess the sites for indications of vandalism or surface collecting. The team has begun collecting global positioning information for selected sites as part of BLM's effort to install signage at archaeological and historic sites. The core of the archaeological research team is retired professional archaeologists who wish to remain active in archaeology. They conduct large block surveys in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act for archaeological sites within the jurisdiction of

the field office. They presented professional papers at the 12th Mogollon Meetings in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and plan to present another symposium for the 13th conference to be held in El Paso, Texas, in 2003. Both teams provide support in the identification of significant heritage resources and preservation planning and logistics. The monitoring team has contributed 1,750 volunteer hours and the research team has contributed another 1,800 hours, for total service in excess of 3,500 hours that is valued by BLM at \$56,175.

CLIFF AND JANET TIPTON

BLM Field Office

Richfield, Utah

Cliff and Janet Tipton, volunteers for the Utah State Wild Horse Team, are entering their fifth year of volunteer service to BLM. Since becoming volunteers, they have not missed any wild horse and burro adoptions held in the state of Utah and have traveled from one end of the state to the other promoting the program. They have spent countless hours assisting at adoptions by working at information booths, inspecting trailers and monitoring traffic, talking to adopters, and participating in educational seminars. In addition, the Tiptons took part in the Olympic Horse and Burro Project. This project involved the selection, gentling, and training of nine horses and three burros from Nevada, California, and Utah to participate in the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics. During the Olympics, Cliff and Janet conducted numerous interviews for local, national, and international media. As a result

of Cliff and Janet's magnificent job, BLM was flooded with applicants eager to adopt these special animals. The Tiptons volunteered over 2,000 hours of service for the Olympics alone, with an estimated value of \$30,000. Since the Olympics, they have established an adopter assistance program called Intermountain Wild Horse and Burro Advisors, Inc., and continue to spend approximately 100 hours a month supporting BLM.

CATHY, HANNAH, AND HOLLIE BECKER
KAREN AND SARAH CLAYSON
*BLM Field Office
Casper, Wyoming*

The Beckers and Claysons have been instrumental in the success of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming. Since the Center opened in 2002, they have helped educate visitors about the importance of America's historic trails. Their passionate knowledge inspires others to seek

more information about our national heritage. In anticipation of a visit from Vice President and Mrs. Dick Cheney, the Beckers and Claysons developed a presentation incorporating the diary entries of emigrant families traveling west. They presented the program to the Cheneys and also made them a gift of a journal similar to those used by the pioneers. These volunteers were key participants in the Trail Center's first holiday event and promoted it on local radio stations and newspapers. More than 600 community members attended the three-hour event. Dressed in period clothing and using historically accurate props, the group assisted Center staff during the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's annual Outdoor Heritage Expo. The Children's History Club, initiated by Hannah, Hollie, and Sarah, has taken root, with more than 20 area children in grades three through six attending monthly meetings. Working as a team, the mothers and daughters plan each session's topic and activity and present the material.



Sometimes volunteers get a chance to meet VIPs. Vice President and Mrs. Cheney visited the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, in 2002 and met with volunteers, Cathy Becker, Karen Clayson, and daughters. These award-winning volunteers help interpret the past for visitors.

BLM EMPLOYEE AWARD RECIPIENT

LINDA BERKEY

BLM Volunteer Coordinator

Grand Junction Field Office, Colorado

As volunteer coordinator for the BLM Grand Junction Field Office, Linda oversees one of the most successful programs in BLM. Under her direction, volunteers contributed about 30,000 hours during 2002, a 20 percent increase over 2001. She uses a variety of recruitment methods to attract volunteers, including coordination with local schools,

newspaper coverage, community contacts, and local TV. She never forgets to recognize volunteers for their service. Linda, a key member of the local chapter of Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA), helped set up a statewide conference in Grand Junction last year. In recent years, she helped arrange local media coverage during a campaign for the “Year of the Volunteer” and contributed to the publication of the *Mesa County Volunteer Opportunity Guide*. She trains other staff on personnel, volunteer, and administrative issues, and uses her vast expertise in the areas of personnel and administration to find innovative solutions to complex volunteer issues.